

# Stress Relieving Herbs and Foods in Ayurveda

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## **What is stress?**

Stress is the body's reaction to challenging situations. It is our original flight or fight response when faced with a new experience. The body actually releases chemicals like adrenaline to help cope physically and emotionally. This causes the familiar reactions of a pounding heart, flushed face, sweating etc. Small amounts of stress are actually good since they help to protect us. We think more clearly to make a quick decision, are able to work faster to meet a deadline, push ourselves harder to accomplish a task. All of the body's systems work in a higher gear in a situation of stress. However when stress lingers day-in and day-out, when you are in constantly demanding situations, the body's systems are unable to function normally. In a state of chronic stress, the body feels that it is in a constant

life-threatening situation and can no longer relax. Being in a constant state of alert soon causes the body's systems to break down.

## **Who can get affected by stress?**

Just about anybody including babies can get affected by stress. Over 89% of people have reported experiencing serious stress in their lives. Over 65% of visits to family doctors are for stress-related symptoms.

## **What are the symptoms of stress?**

We can all recognize the immediate symptoms of stress

"Pounding heart

"Fast breathing or difficulty breathing

"Mouth goes dry

"Trembling

"Muscle tightening especially those of the stomach

"Need to urinate

**The long term effects of stress include:**

- "Pain
- "Heart disease and high blood pressure
- "Obesity
- "Autoimmune diseases such as arthritis
- "Depression
- "Inability to focus
- "Problems sleeping
- "Digestive problems which can lead to chronic conditions such as IBS and Crohn's disease
- "Loss of sexual drive
- "Abuse of alcohol, cigarettes and

drugs in an attempt to relax.

**What causes stress?**

Stress can be caused by internal and external factors. Stress is caused by large part on an individual's perception. For e.g. driving may not seem stressful to some but can be to others. Even positive situations such as getting married or starting college can be highly stressful. In fact any event that is perceived as a challenge can be stressful.

The Chart showing reasons of stress according to Age-group:

Sr.No.	Age - Group	Stress Reasons
1.	Kids (0 - 5 years)	Parents not paying attention, Nuclear Family etc.
2.	Adolescence( 6-12)	Study, Homework. etc.
3.	Teenagers (13-19)	Failure in Exams, Addictions, Bad relationships. etc.
4.	Adults (20-35)	Lifestyle, Work stress, Job Competition, Failure in Relationship, Divorce , Jail term , Fired from job , Marriage , Death of a close relative, etc.
5.	Middle age (36-65)	Marriage separation , Jail term , Marriage reconciliation, etc.
6.	Senior Citizens (66 and above)	Spouse's death , Negligence from Children, Loneliness, Retirement , Injury or illness , etc.



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### **What are some natural ways to prevent and treat stress?**

- I. A person's ability to cope with stress is hugely affected by relationships. Build strong relationships with loved ones, friends and co-workers.
- II. Your outlook on life also determines your perception of situations. Try to keep a positive, upbeat attitude. Do not try to bring perfection, learn to be easy-going. Everyone goes through challenging situations in life but those who are emotionally healthy are able to bounce back more quickly and move forward
- III. Exercise is a great means of relaxing and relieving stress
- IV. Practice other stress relieving methods such as yoga, meditation.
- V. Get involved in hobbies like gardening and scrapbooking

- VI. Take Bath- It relaxes your body, Nervous system, and Tension.
- VII. Drink lot of water.
- VIII. Read an Uplifting or Inspiring Book.
- IX. Lie on the Couch for a While

### **Stress relieving factors from the view of Ayurveda:**

#### **Take a Bath**

A bath relaxes the nervous system, releases tension, and helps to quiet the mind. If you like, you can add ½ cup Ginger powder and ½ cup baking soda to the water for increased relaxation and healing. This combination encourages circulation, sweating, and detoxification, but it is also quite soothing, making it very supportive when stress is elevated. If your pitta is high, be mindful that the ginger and baking soda can increase internal heat and you may not want to stay in the bath as long. An Epsom salt bath can also be very relaxing and cleansing. Use hot water for kapha and vata, warm water for pitta.

#### **Practice Oil Pulling**

Swishing and gargling with warm, untoasted sesame oil or coconut oil helps to remove tension from the jaw, improves the sense of taste, and removes natural toxins from the mouth, teeth, and gums. Begin by sipping a tablespoon or two of Daily Swish, our specially-formulated oil-pulling blend, or use plain Organic Sesame Oil. Swish the

oil from side to side, front to back, and through the teeth for up to twenty minutes. Spit out the oil and rinse with warm water. For more detailed instructions, see our resource on How to Do Oil Pulling.

#### **Do Abhyanga (Ayurvedic Oil Massage)**

This ancient practice of self-massage with oil calms the nervous system, lubricates and rejuvenates the tissues, and promotes healthy circulation throughout the body. It is no coincidence that the Sanskrit word for oil, sneha, also means love. Abhyanga is a profound practice of rejuvenation and loving self-care that benefits both the physical body and the more subtle realms of consciousness. In addition, the oil itself forms a protective sheath around the body that can help to buffer the nervous system against stress. Each morning, before a shower or bath, massage about ¼-½ cup warm organic oil into the skin. For further instructions on this rejuvenating technique, and for support choosing the best oil for your constitution and current state of balance, please see our resource on Ayurvedic Self-Massage.



## **Practice Nasya**

Nasya is the practice of applying medicated oil to the nasal passages. It soothes these delicate tissues, promotes unobstructed breathing, relieves accumulated stress, and supports mental clarity. Nasya should not be performed by pregnant or menstruating women. Each morning, apply three to five drops of Nasya Oil into each nostril.

## **Massage Your Feet before Bed**

Before bed, apply some warm Sleep Easy Oil to your feet. Or if you prefer, use plain Sesame Oil, Brahmi Oil, or Bhringaraj Oil. This practice grounds the energy, soothes the nervous system, reduces stress, quiets the mind, and promotes sound sleep. Remember that sleep is one of the body's most essential avenues of rejuvenation. Be sure to wear some old socks to bed to protect your sheets.

## **Herbs that help to stay calm & positive:**

Ayurveda also reveres a number of herbs for their ability to foster clarity and health in the mind-body organism. These herbs specifically bolster the mind and the nervous system, and can help to encourage a sense of ease in the face of our daily challenges.

## **Bacopa / Brahmi**

Brahmi/Gotu Kola is incredibly sattvic in nature and is renowned for its ability to balance the nervous system and the mind. It is a cooling,

relaxing tonic for pitta, and it helps to calm vata in the mind. Brahmi/Gotu Kola liquid extract is also available.

**Brahmi herb is considered a brain tonic.** It has found mention in Ayurvedic texts for its beneficial effects on the brain and ability to alleviate stress. It has even been traditionally used in treating epilepsy, asthma and other convulsion disorders. Just 100mg of the brahmi extract has a stronger antioxidant action than 5 times the recommended daily dose of vitamin E.

A premier herb for supporting brain health

## **Ashwagandha**

Ashwagandha has long been celebrated for its ability to support the body in coping with stress while calming the mind. As a highly regarded adaptogen, ashwagandha encourages quality energy throughout the day and sound sleep at night. Ashwagandha tablets and liquid extract are also available. Promotes relaxation, enhances brain functions

## **Tulasi /Holy Basil**

Supports normal cortisol levels & calms the mind

## **Jatamansi / Greater Galangal:**

cleanse the gap regions between the three areas. In the Vedic understanding, the gap regions are very important, because that is where all intelligence resides. This keeps communica-

tion flow and coordination between the three strong and clear. One additional herb plays a key role: Winter Cherry (Ashwagandha). This herb enhances the mind's overall ability to fight stress.

**Triphala:** is a powerful tonic for the digestive system. If you are feeling sluggish, dull or occasionally constipated, chances are that toxins are building up in your body. Toxins accumulate when your digestion - and elimination - are out of balance, which can lead to skin breakouts, menstrual cramps, fatigue, feelings of sadness and many other health issues. Triphala, available in Organic Digest Tone (Triphala Plus), is the every-night overnight detox and digestion balancer, supporting assimilation, balanced Agni and Ojas. This is Maharishi Ayurveda's number-1-selling digestion herbal.

**Amla:** produces total health benefits. It helps strengthen the mind, eyes, heart, skin, and digestion; boosts cellular regeneration; and promotes a positive nitrogen balance for improved growth of muscle tissue. The Ayurvedic herbs in this formula help maintain normal and clear arterial walls. They do this by aiding healthy digestion and supporting balanced fat metabolism. These herbs nourish the blood, muscles and functioning of the heart, to help keep the heart healthy as you age. According to Maharishi Ayurveda, the heart is the

seat of Ojas, the substance that maintains life and promotes bliss and longevity.

### **Eat a Supportive Diet**

Committing to eating a balanced diet does not have to be an overwhelming or taxing endeavor. In fact, when we're dealing with chronic stress, our lives are often rather complicated, and our systems generally respond better to solutions that are comparatively simple. The diet needs to be a wholesome source of nourishment and grounding. While you can certainly study the nuances of eating a vata-pacifying, pitta-pacifying, or kapha-pacifying diet, it is probably best to focus on emphasizing healthy, whole foods, and minimizing processed foods, stimulants, and refined sugars (which we often reach for when time is short and our bodies are craving nourishment). If you don't have a lot of time to cook your own meals, soups, stews, root vegetables, and other simple, grounding foods are usually good choices. Or, choose prepared foods that are aligned with the healthy, whole food model. Asian restaurants and the prepared foods section of many health food stores often have a good range of options.

### **Healthy Fruits and Dry fruits for Stress:**

1. Walnut (Akrod): it's shape is like brain that is why helpful for memory enhancement.
2. Almonds (Badam): it's shape is like

heart that is why helpful in heart disease.

3.Fig (Anjir): It contains good antioxidants which helpful for body development.

4.Guava: Good source of calcium and fibers.

5.Apple: Good source of iron and vitamins.

6.Banana: Good source of iron and vitamins.

Fruits Juices (Santarpan) gives instant energy, relaxes body and mind.

Healthy Foods for Stress relief:

1.Milk with Shatavari kalp.

2.Satwayjay - Suvarna bhasma.

3.Roupya Bhasma.

4.Popcorns (Lahya): popcorns made out of Sorghum bicolor (Jowar).



### **Ayurvedic Herbs for Dissolving Stress**

Reduces Generalized Anxiety  
Researchers at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) conducted a randomized, controlled pilot study to measure the effects of an Ayurvedic herbal formulation called

Worry Free on ten patients who suffered from Generalized Anxiety Disorder. This condition affects 25% of the population.

The study took three months. One group took two tablets of Worry Free twice a day, while the other group took a placebo. After three months of taking Worry Free, 80% of the Worry Free group no longer exhibited Generalized Anxiety Disorder, exhibiting a two-fold greater decrease than the placebo subjects.

### **What did the herbs do in mental health?**

The group of traditional Ayurvedic herbs supports enhanced mental function. They allow a person to recall past experiences, relate them to a present problem, and learn from new experience with less anxiety and less upset. In brief, they support mental processing ability.

In Ayurveda this mental processing ability is divided into three categories. They are: 1.) Dhi (acquisition), 2.) Dhriti (retention), and 3.) Smriti (recall). The Worry Free herbs helped with stress because they enhance processing power. The formula contains a special group of herbs (Herpestis Monniera, Aloeweed, and Heart-leaved Moonseed) which do this. These are called Medhya (mind) herbs. These special herbs nurture the three mental processing abilities and coordination between them.

## Looking Deeper: Mental Strain = Imbalanced Subdoshas

The Ayurvedic explanation is this: When people are under stress, the subdoshas governing the mind respond by producing more fluid. It's similar to the extra saliva produced by the taste buds when you're about to eat spicy foods. The extra saliva protects the whole digestive system, and helps prevent the food from irritating your system.

**Pitta** (The Subdosha Sadhaka Pitta) begins to burn hotter, while Vata creates a drying effect. Then Kapha generates extra fluids to counteract this effect and protect the brain. Under strain, the fluid created by Kapha increases, and begins to douse the mind's processing fire (Medhya Agni) supporting Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti. Enough stress, and it can put out or dampen this mental fire (Agni). And when this happens, Ama - toxins - gets created. The Ama accumulates in the gaps and microchannels of the brain, mixes with the fluids created by Kapha, and creates a harmful type of cortisol, the indicator of stress.

Cortisol in itself is not bad. It's created by the body to protect the brain. But when Kapha is imbalanced and there's Ama in the physiology, cortisol does more harm than good. From the Ayurvedic perspective, the reason that the subjects' cortisol levels went down after using Worry Free is because key herbs enhanced the

brain's digestive fire. When it's burning brightly again, Ama is no longer being produced. Then cortisol stays in balance, and this protects the brain from stress.

## Conclusion

Creating inner calm is a time-honored focus of Ayurveda. A variety of modalities help accomplish this, and a few quick and easy choices that support calm are listed below. As with any health goal, a multifaceted approach usually delivers the best results. Diet, lifestyle, spices, routine, stress reduction and herbs can all play a fruitful role in creating inner calm. Organic Vata Calming Spice Mix - Spices are both flavor-enhancers and therapeutic. Organic "Churnas" are precise blends of Ayurvedic spices and seasonings that include all six Ayurvedic tastes.

The Ayurvedic herbals listed below are core herbal products supporting important areas of Ayurvedic wellness.

The Ayurvedic herbs in this formulation help maintain proper balance of 'Agni,' the intelligent digestive fire. The herbs help balance occasional excess acid and digestive fire; support overall digestion; and help the body preserve the purity and vitality of nutrients from foods you eat.

**Prostate Health:** Prostate Protection from Maharishi Ayurveda - From the Maharishi Ayurveda perspective, a sedentary lifestyle, lack of proper



nutrients and urine retention can impact prostate health. The traditional Ayurvedic herbs in this formula deliver nutritional support over a broad range of targeted areas. They help balance testosterone levels and support vitality, promote healthy prostate size and function, purify the urinary tract, and support the body's natural immune system. This blend of Ayurvedic ingredients helps cleanse genitourinary tract impurities caused by unhealthy dietary habits and exposure to environmental toxins. They also:

"Support natural immunity in the genitourinary tract

"Promote healthy urinary flow rate

"Rejuvenate the reproductive system

"Help maintain healthy prostate size and function

"Enhance the reproductive fluid

"Support tissue health in the prostate gland

"Support healthy reproductive fluid

"Support healthy libido

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